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ABSTRACT

When the novel "The Grapes of Wrath" was published in 1939, it had an explosive effect on the public, calling attention to the problems of migrant farm workers during the Great Depression. This casebook provides primary materials on the period and the plight of the migrant worker that bring to life the problems John Steinbeck immortalized in his novel. Included are interviews with eyewitnesses to the Dust Bowl, diaries and autobiographies of migrant farm workers in the 1930s, newspaper articles and editorials of the period, and other unique materials, many of which have never appeared in print. All the materials in the casebook can be used in literature, American history, and interdisciplinary classes to enrich the study of this novel and its time. The casebook is divided into the following chapters: Introduction; Suffering and Sacrifice: A Literary Analysis of "The Grapes of Wrath"; Money and the Great Depression; Farming in the Great Depression; Migrant Farm Workers; Unions in the Fields; Law and Lawlessness in the Joads' World; and After "The Grapes of Wrath": Cesar Chavez and the Farm Workers at the Close of the Twentieth Century. Each chapter is followed by study questions, topics for research papers and class discussion, and suggestions for further reading. (NKA)

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